

## Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers May 3, 2004

### NETS FEATURES

#### **9<sup>TH</sup> Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit- Lansing, Michigan**

Thomas O Reel, Ph.D., President of the Traffic Safety Association of Michigan and a charter member of the NETS Advisory Council was recently honored at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit held on April 27-28, 2004 in Lansing, MI. Tom received the Richard H. Austin Long-Term Traffic Safety Award for his 35 years of dedication to traffic safety. Congratulations Tom, for a life long commitment to traffic safety!

#### **NETS May 6<sup>th</sup> e-Seminar**

Last quarter you were notified of the all new on-line traffic safety seminars available from NETS National. If you missed the first opportunity to enroll you can still register for all subsequent seminars. You won't want to miss the May 6<sup>th</sup> opportunity, the subject of this upcoming seminar is, "Understanding the Liabilities Associated with Employees on the Road." Kathleen Konicki, Director of Associate Safety, Nationwide Insurance will be making this online presentation. For more information on how to enroll, please log onto the following internet site: <http://www.trafficsafety.org/NETSseminarhome.asp> If you are unable to view the presentation on May 6<sup>th</sup>, you can still enroll and watch the seminar anytime after its initial viewing.

#### **2004 Click It or Ticket/Operation ABC Mobilization Planner is Available**

Back on April 14, 2004 you were notified of Michigan's state wide mobilization plans and what you could do to help sponsor and promote these traffic safety initiatives. Following are additional national resources which can supplement the resources that have already been provided to you by our Michigan NETS program through the Office of Highway Safety Planning:

From May 24 to June 6, law enforcement agencies in hundreds of communities across the country will be conducting Click It or Ticket campaigns that incorporate zero tolerance enforcement of seat belt laws with a special emphasis on teens and young adults. These efforts — coupled with paid advertising and the support of government agencies, traffic safety organizations, local advocates and others — are expected to dramatically increase seat belt use, and defend us against one of the greatest threats to us all — traffic crashes. The 2004 Click It or Ticket/Operation ABC Mobilization Planner is available by visiting: <http://www.buckleupamerica.org/mayplanner/2004/index.php>

### Latest Traffic Safety News

#### **OSHA Names Special Assistant to Lead Motor Vehicle Safety and Health Initiatives**

The administrator of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will name a special assistant to lead a motor vehicle safety and health initiative, an agency official said April 12. The new assistant to Administrator John Henshaw will have no other responsibility except motor vehicle safety, according to Davis Layne, OSHA deputy assistant secretary, during a forum on Occupational Road Safety at the Pan American Health Organization for World Health Day 2004. Roadway crashes are the leading cause of fatal injuries to workers in the United States, with an average of 1,300 worker deaths each year, or about 22 percent of all worker deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### **Driving Under the Influence of TV**

Concerned about drivers already distracted while eating, smoking, or talking on cell phones? What about watching TV? Thirty-eight states now prohibit drivers from watching TV mostly by controlling the location of video monitors inside vehicles. Twenty-one states prohibit TV screens from being visible to the driver. The other 17 specify that monitors be located behind the driver's seat. At least a dozen states exempt in-dash screens for maps and driving directions, according to the Consumer Electronics Association. For more information, visit the New York Times article at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/22/technology/circuits/22cars.html?ex=1083470400&en=98b93179c741d717&ei=5070>

### **Coffee's Caffeine Content Varies with the Stores**

Getting a cup of coffee to stay awake on your commute? If you get your coffee at one of those specialty coffeehouses, you should know that you are probably getting a higher level of caffeine than the coffee you drink at home or other locations. A laboratory engaged by the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) found that house blends at Starbucks Corp., Gloria Jean's and other gourmet coffee chains have an average of 56 percent more caffeine than samples tested at 7-Eleven Inc. stores and 29 percent more than those at Dunkin' Donuts nationwide. The WSJ report, however, found that a single "Grande" coffee at a specialty coffeehouse is within the recommended caffeine limit.

### **New In-Vehicle Technologies Introduced at Auto Show**

Many new innovative vehicle technologies have just been revealed at the New York Auto Show recently. Some of these new products were the "smart remote start," a real time traffic system provided through the car's navigation system, and a terrain response system that lets drivers choose from six different terrain options, including dynamic dry road for high-speed conditions, grass/snow for slick conditions, and deep ruts for extreme off-roading. For more information, visit:

<http://www.detnews.com/2004/autosconsumer/0404/21/g03-128780.htm> For more information on real time traffic systems, visit <http://www.telematicsupdate.com/homepage2.asp?news=41332>

### **New Technology to Log Characteristics of Vehicle**

Did you ever wonder what happened to your car once you hand the keys to a parking attendant? With a new technology by Davis Instruments called the CarChip, you don't have to wonder anymore. According to a New York Times article, "The chip logs driver performance, including speed (measured every five seconds), hard braking, hard acceleration, distance driven, date and time. It can also track engine diagnostics like coolant temperature and fuel pressure, and it will tell you in plain English why your check-engine light is on: 'P030: cylinder 4 misfire detected.' In an accident, the EX model works as a black box, generating a log of the car's status in the 20 seconds leading up to the crash." To view the full NY Times article, visit : <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/29/technology/circuits/29moto.html?ex=1083816000&en=be08a420b4c842b6&ei=5062&partner=GOOGLE>.

### **A lot of Today's Telematics-Equipped Cars Almost Don't Need Drivers**

According to a recent article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, a lot of today's telematics-equipped cars almost don't need drivers. These clever cars help you reverse, apply their own brakes, map out your route, and pinpoint your location with unerring accuracy if you still manage to take a wrong turn. The article also addressed how the trend toward turning vehicles into mobile movie theatres or mobile offices is prompting auto manufacturers and highway safety experts to question how many electronic devices in our automobiles are too many. The article reports that General Motors in collaboration with the University of Michigan Transportation Institute and the Ford Motor Co, is spending millions of dollars in separate studies to find the answer. For more information on the future of telematics, visit

<http://www.telematicsupdate.com/homepage2.asp?news=41344> and  
<http://www.telematicsupdate.com/homepage2.asp?news=41312>

### **New Report on Side Impact Crashes**

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) has released the results of a new report on side impact crashes with unimpressive results for many carmakers. Ten out of 13 midsize vehicles earned the lowest rating of poor. The results also revealed that side impacts are the second most common fatal crash type after frontal crashes. In addition, about 9,600 people were killed in side impacts in 2002, and in crashes between two passenger vehicles, more driver deaths now occur in vehicles struck in the side than in the front. For more information, view the IIHS press release at

[http://www.highwaysafety.org/news\\_releases/2004/pr041804.htm](http://www.highwaysafety.org/news_releases/2004/pr041804.htm)

### **Air-bag Fraud a Growing Problem**

Air-bag fraud and theft has become a dangerous problem, threatening lives and costing vehicle owners and insurers millions of dollars, according to Rosemary Shahan, president of Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety, a consumer advocacy group based in Sacramento. Robert P. Hartwig, chief economist at the Insurance Information Institute in New York, estimates that more than 75,000 air bags are stolen each year in the United States. Hartwig also said that there appears to be no comprehensive statistics on air-bag fraud and theft or the number of injuries suffered by unsuspecting motorists who thought they had functioning air bags. To view a full article on air-bag fraud in the LA Times, visit:  
<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/highway1/la-hy-wheels21apr21,1,3311607.story>

### **News from USDOT**

#### **One-Quarter of all Automobile Crashes are Caused by Distractions**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that one-quarter of all automobile crashes are caused by some form of distraction. Recent legislation has focused on curbing the use of hand-held cell phones while driving. Yet with the introduction of various in-vehicle telematics, including satellite radio, television and navigation systems, electronic date books and on-board computers, drivers now have a range of high-tech diversions. To view an article on distracted driving, visit <http://www.postherald.com/me042004.shtml>

#### **Automakers and NHTSA Help Keep Seat Belt Usage on the Rise**

Seat belt usage is up to 79 percent from a mere 20 percent in the 1970s. Due in large part to NHTSA initiative, most automakers are going beyond simple sound-and-light warnings if not buckled up. Automakers in their 2004 models are adding intermittent lights and longer chiming sounds. General Motors vehicles will even include a text message to drivers. For more information, visit:

<http://www.womanmotorist.com/index.php/news/main/2893/event=view>.

#### **Incentives Grants to Combat Alcohol-Impaired Driving, Seat Belt Use and Child Restraints**

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta recently announced incentive grants totaling \$33 million to states for programs to combat alcohol-impaired driving and to increase the use of seat belts and child restraints. The announcement is based on NHTSA data that shows seat belts and child restraints help save lives. NHTSA estimates that more than 14,000 lives are saved by seat belts each year and another 300 lives per year are saved by child restraints. The seat belt use rate in the United States is 79 percent. The child safety seat use rate for infants is 99 percent, the rate for those aged 1-3 is 94 percent, and the rate for children 4 to 7 (booster seat age) is 83 percent. To view the NHTSA press release, visit

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/announce/press/pressdisplay.cfm?year=2004&filename=pr17-04.html>.

### **New Report on Aggressive Driving Programs**

NHTSA has released a report that evaluates the effects of two aggressive driving enforcement programs in Indianapolis, Indiana, and Tucson, Arizona. To view the release, visit <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research/AggDrivingEnf/index.html>.

### **International traffic safety News**

#### **Road Congestion a Cost Concern for British Companies**

British business is being damaged by the failing road infrastructure and urgent work is needed to avoid more companies losing money, according to a new in-depth report by RAC Foundation. The report found at least £15 billion is wasted in traffic jams every year – through lost time, wasted fuel and missed appointments – and 87 percent of businesses cited road congestion as a significant problem. Furthermore, 99 percent of companies said they depended on the roads for their daily activities, and congestion was causing major problems. Based on employers' responses, the report indicated that unless the government invests more cash in the roads in future, it could severely hamper Britain's economic growth. For more information, visit the RAC website for its press release at <http://www.racfoundation.org/releases/270404rac.htm>

#### **Uganda Starts Road Safety Initiative**

Uganda telecom has launched a new road safety initiative by placing safety messages on mileage signs on one of the main highways. This campaign is spawned by the increase in motor vehicle crashes from 15,177 last year to 17,422 this year.

#### **Report on Safety and Mobility Needs of Older Drivers**

The Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute has released a report that reviews the safety and mobility needs of older drivers. The report describes road, vehicular, and intelligent transportation system measures designed to improve the safety of older drivers. To view the full report, visit <http://www.vti.se/pdf/reports/R497A.pdf>.

#### **New Leaflet to Promote Safety Awareness**

In conjunction with the European Roundtable on Road Safety, the European Road Federation has released a leaflet designed to promote safety awareness among motorists. For more information, visit [http://www.erf.be/files/2636\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.erf.be/files/2636_leaflet.pdf)

#### **Tough Legislation Prompts U.K. Fleets to Issue In-House Licenses**

Tough health and safety legislation will prompt a growth in the number of U.K. fleets issuing company drivers with in-house driving licenses predicts Graham Hurdle, managing director of fleet risk management and driver training specialist Pro-Drive. Meanwhile, engineering supplier Barnes, has already begun issuing its own in-house licenses to drivers. Without the permit, which is effectively a secondary license, no staff may drive the company's vehicles or use their own vehicles on business. For more information, visit: [http://www.fleetnewsnet.co.uk/newshome/home\\_fullarticle/?ArticleID=34417](http://www.fleetnewsnet.co.uk/newshome/home_fullarticle/?ArticleID=34417).



### **Campaign Launched to Warn Motorists About Trucks Blind Spots**

Ontario Trucking Association and the Ministry of Transportation kicked off an important road safety campaign that warns motorists to avoid driving in a large truck's blind spots. As many as 35 percent of truck-car fatalities are tied to motorists inadvertently driving in a truck's blind spots. Following the launch ceremony, the Minister rode in a tractor-trailer to see for himself how cars and trucks can better share the road. For more information, visit

[http://www.ontruck.org/news/releases/2004/prel\\_2004\\_04\\_22\\_123659\\_msoffice.php3](http://www.ontruck.org/news/releases/2004/prel_2004_04_22_123659_msoffice.php3)

### **ABD Challenges Drivers to Better Road Safety Skills**

The Association of British Drivers (ABD) is challenging the UK's company car drivers to better their road safety skills by being OAPs. By this, the ABD means Observe, Anticipate and Plan. According to the association, OAP demonstrates three key essentials of safe driving:

- Observation – drivers need to constantly look around, checking for reflections in shop windows, movement behind parked cars and children on pavements.
- Anticipation – if there's a child standing on the pavement, drivers should expect him or her to run out and therefore slow down.
- Planning – drivers should plan ahead, not just wait for accidents to happen.

### **Reading Vehicle Owner's Manual Helps Drivers Avoid Crashes**

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) believe crashes could be avoided if owners were completely aware of the safety features installed in their cars. Because of this, U.K. fleet drivers are being advised to learn about their vehicles' safety features by reading the owner's manual.

### **U.K. Company Car Drivers Still Using Mobile Phone While Driving**

Tens of thousands of U.K. company car drivers are still using a hand-held mobile phone while driving, almost five months after it was made illegal. The number of companies with mobile phone policies has surged from 33 percent in 2003 to 83 percent today. For more information, visit

[http://www.findarticles.com/cf\\_dls/m0MXI/5\\_23/102341935/p1/article.jhtml](http://www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m0MXI/5_23/102341935/p1/article.jhtml)

### **Work/Life:**

#### **Black Box Now For Residential Use**

Ever wonder where your teenager is or where they have been in the family car? The black box, a technology normally used by companies with a large fleet of vehicles, will soon be available for U.K. residential use. Matrix Telematics said a tracking system could be fitted in a car. According to an article from BBC, "The black box recorder not only tracks the car's location by satellite, but also monitors speed and any aggressive braking. Once the teenager returns home, they are likely to find their parent downloading a full report of the journey from the family computer." To view the full BBC article, visit

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/real\\_story/3639513.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/real_story/3639513.stm)